

Western wildfires force evacuations in Arizona, California

By FELICIA FONSECA

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) —

The Western U.S. on Monday marked another day of hot, dry and windy weather as crews from California to New Mexico battled wildfires that had forced hundreds of people to leave their homes.

Several hundred homes on the outskirts of Flagstaff, Arizona, were evacuated and the Arizona Snowbowl ski resort was closed as a precaution because of a wildfire — the second to hit the area this year.

Crews were expecting gusts up to 50 mph (80 kph) as they battled the blaze that has burned through parts of the footprint left by another springtime fire that destroyed over two dozen homes. No homes have been lost in the fire reported Sunday that has burned about 8 square miles (20 square kilometers).

Continued on next page



Janetta Kathleen and her horse, Squish, watch as smoke rises above neighborhoods on the outskirts of Flagstaff, Ariz., Sunday, June 12, casts a glow above neighborhoods.

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"It's literally like déjà vu," said Coconino County sheriff's spokesman Jon Paxton. "We are in the same exact spot doing the same exact thing as we were a month and a half ago. People are tired."

Wildfires broke out early this spring in multiple states in the Western U.S., where climate change and an enduring drought are fanning the frequency and intensity of forest and grassland fires. The number of square miles burned so far this year is more than double the 10-year national average, and states like New Mexico already have set records with devastating blazes that destroyed hundreds of homes while causing environmental damage that is expected to effect water supplies.

Nationally, more than 6,200 wildland firefighters were battling nearly three dozen uncontained fires that had charred over 1 million acres (4,408 square kilometers), according to the National Interagency Fire Center. Even in Alaska, forecasters have warned that many southwestern fires have grown exceptionally over the last week, which is unusual for that area. Southwest Alaska normally experiences shorter periods of high fire danger because intermittent rain can provide relief, but since mid-May the region has been hot and windy, helping to dry out vegetation.

Favorable weather Monday helped slow progression of a tundra wildfire just



A firefighter watches as a helicopter drops water on the Sheep Fire burning in Wrightwood, Calif., Sunday, June 12, 2022.

Associated Press

over 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) away from an Alaska Native village. Moderate temperatures and a shift in the wind that had been driving the fire toward St. Mary's will allow firefighters to directly attack the flames and increase protections for the Yup'ik community.

The lightning-sparked fire is estimated at about 193 square miles (500 square kilometers). It's burning dry grass and shrubs in southwest Alaska's mostly treeless tundra.

In California, evacuation were ordered for about 300 remote homes near a wildfire that flared up over the weekend in forest land northeast of Los Angeles near the Pacific Crest Trail in the San Gabriel Mountains.

The blaze saw renewed growth Sunday afternoon and by midday Monday had scorched about 1.5

square miles (3.9 square km) of pine trees and dry brush, said fire spokesperson Dana Dierkes.

"The fuel is very dry, so it acts like a ladder, carrying flames from the bottom of the trees to the very top," Dierkes said. Crews were also contending with unpredictable winds that were expected to strengthen later in the day, she said.

Aside from mandatory evacuations for some, the remainder of the mountain town of Wrightwood, with about 4,500 residents, was under an evacuation warning. Several roads also were closed.

The fire was 18% contained. Fire conditions were elevated because of warm and dry weekend weather across Southern California. Monday was expected to be cooler, but another heatwave was expected at midweek, the National

Weather Service said.

In Northern California, a 50-mile (80-km) stretch of State Route 70 was closed indefinitely on Monday after mud, boulders and dead trees inundated lanes during flash floods along a wildfire burn scar.

Several drivers were rescued Sunday evening from debris flowing on the highway when hillsides burned bare by last year's enormous Dixie Fire came loose. No injuries were reported. The causes of the latest California fires were under investigation.

U.S. Forest Service law enforcement officers cited a 57-year-old camper for lighting toilet paper on fire and placing it under a rock Saturday near the origin of the Arizona wildfire. The fire was reported a day later. Court documents show the man told authorities he tried to put the fire out with his sleeping bag, but his attorney said in federal court Monday that doesn't mean his client was responsible for sparking the blaze.

Flagstaff resident Janetta Kathleen rode her horse, Squish, up a hill to get a better look at the wildfire Sunday evening and watched it creep toward homes in the shadow of the mountain. Her home isn't directly in the fire's path, but her family, two bulldogs and horses are ready to go at a moment's notice.

"I need to know what's going on because I have decisions to make for my family," she said. "If the winds shift, we'll be in trouble." Hikers, campers and oth-

ers who were out enjoying the forest also had to leave Sunday. A shelter was set up at a middle school. Strong winds sent embers across U.S. Route 89, the main route to the turnoff for the Grand Canyon's east rim entrance, through the Navajo Nation and up into Utah. Many people commute between the reservation and Flagstaff for work. Parts of the highway remained closed Monday. "We're not working directly on suppressing the fire to get the whole thing out right now," said Coconino National Forest spokesman Brady Smith. "That's not our focus and it's not possible right now. Right now, it's going to be focused on protecting life and property." Smoke from the fire near Flagstaff caused hazy skies in Colorado on Monday, obscuring views of the Rocky Mountains from Denver and other cities along the state's Front Range.

Meanwhile, firefighters worked to contain a small wildfire burning in juniper and piñon pine that briefly caused evacuation orders Sunday in the San Luis Valley's Rio Grande National Forest in southern Colorado. The National Weather Service issued red flag warnings for high fire danger in central and southern parts of Colorado as well as parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

Winds are expected to ease after Monday with some moisture moving in later this week in parts of the Southwest, the weather service said. □

Sanctions sought against FBI over Civil War gold dig videos

By **MICHAEL RUBINKAM**
Associated Press

The FBI either lied to a federal judge about having video of its secretive 2018 dig for Civil War-era gold, or illegally destroyed the video to prevent a father-son team of treasure hunters from gaining access to it, an attorney for the duo asserted in new legal filings that allege a government cover-up.

The FBI has long insisted its agents recovered nothing of value when they went looking for the fabled gold cache. But Finders Keepers, a treasure-hunting company that led agents to the remote woodland site in Pennsylvania in hopes of getting a finder's fee, suspect the FBI found tons of gold and made off with it. After Finders Keepers began pressing the government for information about the dig, the FBI initially said it could produce 17 relevant video files. Then, without explanation, the FBI reduced that number to four. Last week, under court order, the agency finally revealed what it said were the contents of those four videos — and it turns out all had been provided to the FBI by Finders Keepers co-owner Dennis Parada himself, weeks before the dig, at a time when he was of-



FBI agents and representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources set up a base in March, 2018, in Benezette Township, Elk County, Pa.

Associated Press

fering his evidence for buried treasure. The FBI did not say it had any video of the actual excavation, which is what Finders Keepers is seeking. The treasure hunters say they have evidence the FBI indeed shot video of the dig — and they are seeking sanctions against the FBI for what their lawyer cast as a blatant, bad-faith effort to mislead.

On March 13, 2018, Parada's hidden trail camera captured what appears

to be an FBI agent in front of a video camera at the hillside dig site, with other agents in the background. The trail-cam image was included in a legal filing late Friday by lawyer Anne Weismann, who represents Finders Keepers in its Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the government.

The photo "suggests either the FBI has falsely claimed to have no other responsive videotapes or the FBI

illegally destroyed responsive videotapes in an effort to circumvent the FOIA's disclosure requirements," Weismann wrote.

She asked a judge to order the Justice Department to pay a portion of Finders Keepers legal fees to compensate for the legal wrangling over the videos, and hold the FBI accountable for "covering up the results of its excavation ... that highly advanced scientific technology indicated

contained multiple tons of gold."

A message was sent to the FBI seeking comment Monday.

The government's initial court-ordered release of documents last month included a geophysical survey commissioned by the FBI that suggested an object with a mass of up to 9 tons and a density consistent with gold was buried at the site. The FBI used the consultant's work to obtain a warrant to seize any gold found at the site at Dent's Run, about 135 miles (220 kilometers) northeast of Pittsburgh, where legend says an 1863 shipment of Union gold was either lost or stolen on its way to the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia.

The agency has adamantly denied it found anything. The treasure hunters say the FBI has consistently stonewalled.

"For the FBI to now say it has no videotapes of the dig strains credulity and takes this whole affair to the next level," Warren Getler, who has worked closely with Finders Keepers, said Monday. "We have incontrovertible photographic evidence of them videotaping the dig and interviewing their operational leader at the site. It raises a lot of serious questions." □

Justices rule against detained immigrants seeking release

By **MARK SHERMAN**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court has ruled against immigrants who are seeking their release from long periods of detention while they fight deportation orders.

In two cases decided Monday, the court said that the immigrants, who fear persecution if sent back to their native countries, have no right under a federal law to a bond hearing at which they could argue for their freedom no matter how long they are held.

The justices also ruled 6-3 to limit the immigrants ability to band together in court, an outcome that Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote "will leave many vulnerable noncitizens unable to pro-

tect their rights."

In recent years, the high court has taken an increasingly limited view of immigrants' access to the federal court system under immigration measures enacted in the 1990s and 2000s.

"For a while, it seemed like the court was going to push back a bit. In extreme cases, it would interpret a statute to allow for as much judicial review as possible," said Nicole Hallet, director of the immigrants rights clinic at the University of Chicago law school. "Clearly now, the court is no longer willing to do that."

The immigrants who sued for a bond hearing are facing being detained for many months, even years, before their cases are re-

solved.

The court ruled in the cases of people from Mexico and El Salvador who persuaded Homeland Security officials that their fears are credible, entitling them to further review.

Their lawyers argued that they should have a hearing before an immigration judge to determine if they should be released. The main factors are whether people would pose a danger or are likely to flee if set free.

Sotomayor wrote the court's opinion in one case involving Antonio Arteaga-Martinez, who had previously been deported to Mexico. He was taken into custody four years ago, and won release while his



The U.S. Supreme Court, Monday, June 13, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

case wound through the federal courts. His hearing on whether he can remain in the United States is scheduled for 2023.

But Sotomayor wrote that

the provision of immigration law that applies to people like Arteaga-Martinez simply doesn't require the government to hold a bond hearing. □

Ohio governor signs bill allowing armed school employees

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) —

Ohio school districts could begin arming employees as soon as this fall under a bill signed into law Monday by GOP Gov. Mike DeWine. The law, as enacted, requires up to 24 hours of training before an employee can go armed, and up to eight hours of annual training. The training programs must be approved by the Ohio School Safety Center, and DeWine announced he's ordering the center to require the maximum 24 hours and the maximum eight hours. Schools can provide additional training if they wish, DeWine said.

Before announcing the bill signing, the governor outlined several other school safety measures he and lawmakers have promoted, including \$100 million for school security upgrades in schools and \$5 million for upgrades at colleges.

The state is also adding 28 employees to the school safety center to work with districts on safety issues and to provide training under the new law. Ohio has also provided \$1.2 billion in wellness funding for schools to address mental health and other issues, the governor said.

The new law "is giving schools an option, based on their particular circumstances, to make the best decision they can make with the best information they have," DeWine said.

The governor said his preference remains that school districts hire armed school



Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine discusses a law that gives school districts the option of arming trained school employees, on Monday, June 13, 2022, in Columbus, Ohio.

Associated Press

resource officers, but said the law is another tool for districts that want to protect children. He emphasized that it's optional, not a requirement.

Several big-city Ohio mayors — all Democrats — joined together Monday afternoon to criticize the measure and failure of Republican lawmakers to consider any gun control proposals. The mayors are seeking universal background checks, red flag laws to take firearms away from anyone who is perceived a threat, raising the legal age for gun purchases to 21, and a ban on assault rifles like the kind used in the Uvalde, Texas, school

shooting that killed 19 elementary students and two teachers.

"All of these things are common sense," said Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz. "We're in a situation where we can't pass legislation that 95% of our citizens support."

Also Monday, former Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, DeWine's Democratic opponent for governor, criticized DeWine for signing the armed school employees bill, saying he had failed to make good on his promise to address gun violence after a mass shooting in Dayton killed nine people and wounded more than two dozen in August 2019.

Whaley also criticized DeWine for previously signing bills that eliminated Ohioans' duty to retreat before using force — the so-called "stand your ground" bill — and made a concealed weapons permit optional for those legally allowed to carry a weapon. The concealed weapons change took effect Monday.

"The politics got hard and Mike DeWine folded," Whaley said. "Nine people in Dayton was worth the political risk."

In the wake of the Dayton massacre, DeWine announced his "STRONG Ohio" plan to address gun violence. His proposals include higher penalties for

violent felons caught with guns and ensure that mentally ill people don't have guns if a court deems them dangerous to themselves and others.

Cracking down on violent felons is also a way to protect children, the governor said. "We're seeing a lot of children who are killed not in school, but in their own homes, on their own streets," DeWine said. "And they're killed by violent offenders, and they're usually repeat violent offenders, who are shooting randomly, or shooting at somebody and the kid gets in the way."

Last year, 120 children died of gunfire, compared to 96 in 2020 and 71 in 2019, according to state Health Department data.

DeWine on Monday once again called on fellow Republican lawmakers to approve those measures, though they've shown no interest in the bills so far.

Democrats have said the law sends the wrong message coming so soon after the Uvalde massacre. Republicans say the measure could prevent such shootings. Lawmakers fast-tracked the legislation to counter the impact of a court ruling that said, under current law, armed school workers would need hundreds of hours of training. The measure is opposed by major law enforcement groups, gun control advocates, and the state's teachers unions. It's supported by a handful of police departments and school districts. □

Yellowstone flooding sweeps away bridge, washes out roads

HELENA, Mont. (AP) —

Major flooding swept away at least one bridge, washed away roads and set off mudslides in Yellowstone National Park on Monday, prompting officials to close the entrances to the popular tourist attraction and evacuate visitors.

The flooding hit after recent "unprecedented rains," park officials said on Facebook.

"Our first priority has been

to evacuate the northern section of the park where we have multiple road and bridge failures, mudslides and others issues," Sholly said in a statement.

The community of Gardiner, Montana, just north of the park, was isolated because the roads going in and out of town are impassable, officials said. The power is out in some areas of the park.

"Due to predictions of high-

er flood levels in areas of the park's southern loop, in addition to concerns with water and wastewater systems, we will begin to move visitors in the southern loop out of the park later today," Sholly said.

Officials won't be able to say when the park might reopen until the flood waters subside and they can assess the damage, he said.

"It is likely that the northern loop will be closed for

a substantial amount of time," he said.

The park was experiencing record flooding, officials said.

Scientists say without extensive study they cannot directly link a single weather event to climate change, but climate change is responsible for more intense and more frequent extreme events such as storms, droughts, floods and wildfires.

Recent heavy rains and spring runoff also led to flooding in southern Montana, with water running down streets in Red Lodge on Monday. Evacuation orders have been issued in Carbon County, the Office of Emergency Management said.

Montana has been dealing with flooding while elsewhere in the West wildfires burned in hot, dry and windy weather. □

UK moves to rewrite Brexit rules; EU threatens legal action

By SYLVIA HUI and DANICA KIRKA

LONDON (AP) — Britain's government on Monday proposed new legislation that would unilaterally rewrite post-Brexit trade rules for Northern Ireland, despite opposition from some U.K. lawmakers and EU officials who say the move violates international law.

The proposed bill seeks to remove customs checks on some goods entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the U.K. That will override parts of the trade treaty that Prime Minister Boris Johnson signed with the European Union less than two years ago.

Britain's government maintained its move is justified under international law because of the "genuinely exceptional situation," and Foreign Secretary Liz Truss blamed the EU for blocking a negotiated settlement. The European Commission said it could take legal action against the U.K.

Existing trade rules "provide business operators in Northern Ireland with access to the EU single market for goods. The U.K. government's approach puts this access — and related opportunities — at risk," said European Commission Vice



Demonstrators protest outside Hillsborough Castle, ahead of a visit by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, in Hillsborough, Northern Ireland, Monday, May, 16, 2022.

Associated Press

President Maros Sefcovic. In Ireland, Prime Minister Micheal Martin said it was "very regrettable for a country like the U.K. to renege on an international treaty." German Chancellor Olaf Scholz echoed the sentiment, saying there was "no reason" for the U.K. to make such a move.

"It's a rejection of all the agreements we reached between the European Union and Great Britain," Scholz said. "The European

Union will react to this as one and it has the whole toolbox at its disposal."

Brushing aside criticism, Johnson told reporters that the proposed change is "relatively simple to do."

"Frankly, it's a relatively trivial set of adjustments in the grand scheme of things," he told LBC Radio.

He argued that his government's "higher and prior legal commitment" is to the 1998 Good Friday agreement that brought peace

and stability to Northern Ireland.

Arrangements for Northern Ireland — the only part of the U.K. that shares a land border with an EU nation — have proved the thorniest issue in Britain's divorce from the bloc, which became final at the end of 2020. At the center of the dispute is the Northern Ireland Protocol, which now regulates trade ties between Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K., and the Republic

of Ireland, part of the EU. Britain and the EU agreed in their Brexit deal that the Irish land border would be kept free of customs posts and other checks because an open border is a key pillar of the peace process that ended decades of violence in Northern Ireland. Instead, to protect the EU's single market, there are checks on some goods, such as meat and eggs, entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the U.K. But the arrangement has proved politically damaging for Johnson because it treats Northern Ireland differently from the rest of the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party has refused to return to the region's power-sharing government until the protocol is scrapped or substantially changed.

The bill to override that arrangement is expected to face opposition in Parliament, including from members of Johnson's own Conservative ranks. Critics say unilaterally changing the protocol would be illegal and would damage Britain's standing with other countries because it's part of a treaty considered binding under international law. □

Israeli ruling coalition teeters as it marks year in office

JERUSALEM (AP) — A member of Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's party said Monday he would cease voting with the governing coalition, dealing yet another blow to the teetering government as it marks one year in office. Nir Orbach, a lawmaker with the religious-nationalist Yemina party, was the latest member of the ruling alliance to abandon support in the Knesset, Israel's parliament.

A trickle of defections and rebellions in recent weeks has left Bennett's coalition of eight divergent parties without a clear majority to pass legislation, raising questions about how long it can survive.

Bennett's government was sworn in last June after four deadlocked elections

that were largely referendums on longtime leader Benjamin Netanyahu's fitness to rule while on trial for corruption. His coalition ranges from dovish liberals to hawkish ultranationalists and a small Islamist faction. They are united in their opposition to Netanyahu but have little else in common. Despite pledging to avoid dealing with key issues such as Israel's policies concerning the Palestinians, the coalition has struggled to find common ground, and two of its members have bolted. Now the coalition and opposition each hold 60 seats in the 120-member parliament, making passing legislation difficult.

Earlier this month parliament failed to pass a bill that would extend legal

protections to Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank. Two members of the coalition voted with the opposition to defeat the bill, while several others abstained.

In a statement, Orbach said he had informed Bennett he is "not part of the coalition." But he held out hope the coalition might somehow be rescued, saying he would not yet vote to dissolve parliament and send the country to another round of elections.

The embattled coalition can remain in power until a majority of lawmakers votes to either dissolve parliament or appoints a different prime minister. Neither scenario appears imminent.

Bennett said in a speech at the Knesset that "this gov-



Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett makes a call before voting on a law on the legal status of Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank, during a session of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, in Jerusalem, June 6, 2022.

Associated Press

ernment isn't perfect, but the alternative isn't better." His main ally, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, wrote on Twitter marking the anniversary

of the government's establishment that "this is the only way to protect Israeli democracy and the strength of the state of Israel." □

Jihadi attacks mount in Burkina Faso despite junta's efforts

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP) — The mutinous soldiers who ousted Burkina Faso's democratically elected president early this year vowed they would do a better job at stopping the jihadi violence rocking the country. Five months later, however, attacks are increasing and patience with the junta appears to be waning.

Many in Burkina Faso supported the military takeover in January, frustrated with the previous government's inability to stem Islamic extremist violence that has killed thousands and displaced at least 2 million. Lt. Col. Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, who led the coup and was later installed as interim president, vowed to restore security.

But violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State increased nearly 7% during the junta's first three months of rule compared with the three months prior, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project.

"Beyond the immeasurable suffering, the effects of the violence and conflict — which show no signs of abating — are likely to lead to renewed popular discontent," said Heni Nsaibia, senior researcher at ACLED.



A man holds a portrait of Lt. Col. Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiba who has taken the reins of Burkina Faso, in Ouagadougou, Jan. 25, 2022.

Associated Press

The latest attack happened in northern Burkina Faso over the weekend when suspected extremists killed at least 55 people, authorities said Monday. Nearly 5,000 people have died in the last two years in Burkina Faso and conflict experts say there will be far-reaching consequences if the violence continues to worsen.

"The decline in Burkina Faso will absolutely fuel the

spread of jihadist activity in the Gulf of Guinea states — Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Togo — where there already is jihadist recruitment and violence," said Michael Shurkin, director of global programs at 14 North Strategies, a consultancy based in Dakar, Senegal.

Damiba has asked citizens to give him until September to see improvement. He's promoted younger officers

with field experience and created a central coordination unit for military operations. His government also has supported local dialogues with jihadis to try to convince the fighters to put down their arms and return to their homes.

Yet violence is intensifying. Since April at least 30 security forces have been killed and two foreigners kidnapped: an American nun and a Polish citizen. Last

week, 11 gendarmes were killed by jihadis in Seno province in the Sahel, said the army in a statement.

The government is losing control of swaths of land, particularly in the Center North and Sahel regions, as jihadis have increased their use of roadside bombs and use more sophisticated weapons.

Government soldiers say they lack equipment and must resort to stealing guns and ammunition from jihadis they kill. Seeing so many of their colleagues die also has taken its toll, the soldiers say.

"Our situation is very difficult. Sometimes the enemy kills us because we're regularly exhausted," said a soldier, who spoke on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorized to speak to journalists.

Jihadis are changing strategy. They are targeting water sources, destroying 32 facilities this year which has reduced access to nearly 300,000 people, said a group of aid organizations operating in the country.

"The conflict is now putting at risk the very thing no one can live without: clean water," said Rebecca Bouchet-Petersen, country director for Solidarity International in Burkina Faso. □

North Korea plans crackdown as Kim pushes for internal unity



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attends a meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Committee in Pyongyang, North Korea Sunday, June 12, 2022.

Associated Press

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM**

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his top

deputies have pushed for a crackdown on officials who abuse their power and commit other "unsound and non-revolutionary acts,"

state media reported Monday, as Kim seeks greater internal unity to overcome a COVID-19 outbreak and economic difficulties.

It wasn't clear what specific acts were mentioned at the ruling Workers' Party meeting on Sunday. But possible state crackdowns on such alleged acts could be an attempt to solidify Kim's control of his people and get them to rally behind his leadership in the face of the domestic hardships, some observers say.

Kim and other senior party secretaries discussed "waging a more intensive struggle against unsound and non-revolutionary acts including abuse of power and bureaucratism revealed among some party

officials," the official Korean Central News Agency said. Kim ordered the authority of the party's auditing commission and other local discipline supervision systems to be bolstered to promote the party's "monolithic leadership" and "the broad political activities of the party through the strong discipline system," KCNA said.

Kim has previously occasionally called for struggles against "anti-socialist practices" at home in the past two years amid outside worries about his country's fragile economy that has been battered by pandemic-related border shutdowns, U.N. sanctions and his own mismanagement. The North's elevated restric-

tions on movement in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak could cause a further strain on the country's economic difficulties, some experts say.

North Korea on May 12 admitted the omicron variant of the coronavirus had infected people, and it subsequently has said about 4.5 million people — more than 17% of its 26 million people — have fallen ill with fevers and only 72 have died. Foreign experts widely doubt the outbreak was North Korea's first, and they believe the statistics being disclosed in state media are manipulated to prevent political damage to Kim while bolstering internal control and promoting his leadership. □

Search continues for missing men in Brazilian Amazon

By **FABIANO MAISONNAVE**
Associated Press

ATALAIA DO NORTE, Brazil
(AP) — The search for an In-

diigenous expert and a journalist who disappeared in a remote area of Brazil's Amazon continued on Monday following the discovery of a backpack, laptop and other personal belongings submerged in a river.

The items were taken by Federal Police officers by boat to Atalaia do Norte, the closest city to the search, and police said Sunday they had identified the items as belonging to the missing men, including a health card and clothes of Bruno Pereira, the Brazilian Indigenous expert.

The backpack, which was identified as belonging to freelance journalist Dom Phillips of Britain, was found tied to a tree that was half-submerged, a firefighter told reporters in Atalaia do Norte. It is the end of the rainy season in the region and part of the forest is flooded.

Paulo Marubo, president of local Indigenous association Univaja, for which Pereira was an adviser, told The Associated Press that search parties from the army, navy, Federal Police, Civil Defense, firefighters and Military Police were working in the area where



An indigenous man aims an arrow during a protest against the disappearance of Indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and freelance British journalist Dom Phillips, in Atalaia do Norte, Vale do Javari, Amazonas state, Brazil, Monday, June 13, 2022.

Associated Press

the belongings were found. Federal police issued a statement Monday denying media reports the two men's bodies had been found. Last week, police found organic matter of apparent human origin in the river, which has been sent for analysis. They haven't detailed what the material is, but President Jair Bolsonaro told local radio Monday it was "human viscera."

Police have also reported finding traces of blood in

the boat of a fisherman who is under arrest as the only suspect in the disappearance.

Search teams had concentrated their efforts around a spot in the Itaquai river where a tarp from the boat used by the missing men was found Saturday by volunteers from the Matis Indigenous group.

"We used a little canoe to go to the shallow water. Then we found a tarp, shorts and a spoon," one of the volunteers, Binin Beshu

Matis, told the AP.

Pereira, 41, and Phillips, 57, were last seen June 5 near the entrance of the Javari Valley Indigenous Territory, which borders Peru and Colombia.

They were returning alone by boat on the Itaquai to Atalaia do Norte but never arrived.

Hundreds of people from several Indigenous groups took to Atalaia do Norte's narrow streets to protest the pair's disappearance Monday.

With traditional garments, bows and arrows and mobile phones, they carried placards criticizing President Jair Bolsonaro, who is widely seen as an opponent of Indigenous rights.

The Javari Valley has seven known Indigenous groups — some only recently contacted, such as the Matis. The valley also has at least 11 uncontacted groups, making the region the largest concentration of isolated tribes in the world.

Officially, the Indigenous territory has a population of about 6,300 people. Many of them live in the small urban center so their children can attend non-Indigenous public schools. They also go to the city to seek medical treatment and collect federal benefits.

That area has seen violent conflicts between fishermen, poachers and government agents. Violence has grown as drug trafficking gangs battle for control of waterways to ship cocaine, although the Itaquai is not a known drug trafficking route.

Authorities have said police are investigating possible links to an international network that pays poor fishermen to fish illegally in the Javari Valley reserve, which is Brazil's second-largest Indigenous territory. □

U.S. sanctions 93 Nicaraguan officials for crackdown

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The U.S. State Department imposed visa restrictions Monday on 93 more Nicaraguan officials for their role in supporting the regime of President Daniel Ortega.

Ortega jailed dozens of opposition figures in order to win a fourth consecutive term in Nov. 7 elections that were broadly criticized as a farce. He has also outlawed dozens of nongovernmental organizations. Since then, dozens of opponents have been tried or convicted in brief trials on vague charges equivalent to treason.

The State Department announced it had pulled the visas of judges who convicted the opposition lead-

ers, as well as legislators who had cooperated in banning NGOs and civic groups.

The department said in a statement that legislators and Interior Ministry officials helped "the regime to tighten its authoritarian grip over Nicaraguan citizens and institutions by using repressive laws to strip more than 400 NGOs and a dozen universities of their legal status."

It added "the regime holds over 180 political prisoners, with many suffering from a lack of adequate food, proper medical care, and even sunlight. One political prisoner has died, and others remain in solitary confinement."

The State Department had previously imposed visa restrictions on 116 individuals linked to the Ortega regime, "including mayors, prosecutors, university administrators, as well as police, prison, and military officials."

In recent months, the Treasury Department has frozen the U.S. assets of the defense minister and other officials in the army, telecom and mining sectors. As with dozens of Nicaraguan officials already under sanctions, U.S. citizens were prohibited from having dealings with them.

With all government institutions firmly within Ortega's grasp and the opposition exiled, jailed or in hiding, the



In this Sept. 5, 2018 file photo, Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega and his wife and Vice President Rosario Murillo, lead a rally in Managua, Nicaragua.

Associated Press

75-year-old leader eroded what hope remained the

country could soon return to a democratic path. □

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U.S Marines will be practicing in Aruba

ORANJESTAD - U.S Marines will come to Aruba for training on June 13th. The Caribbean Coastal Warrior 2022 training will start. In this annual training Marines of the United States Marine Corps will be training together with Dutch Marines from the Marine Squadron Carib. The training lasts several weeks.

The military cooperation between the United States and The Netherlands is solid. The U.S Marines from the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion have yearly practices in Aruba as part of a bilateral training exchange. In addition, Dutch Marines from the Marine Squadron Carib practice yearly in the United States, during the Caribbean Urban Warrior Training on Camp Lejeune,



North Carolina. Caribbean Coastal Warrior is a training whereby especially diving activities


take central stage. This is planned to coincide with the last phase of the frogman training. In this way, efficient use can be made of the instructors in Aruba and from The Netherlands. Herewith different integration moments are created, and both sides become familiar with each other's way of operating and planning. Ultimately, it broadens and deepens the cooperation of all parties. This will increase effectiveness in the event of actual joint efforts.

Suitable training hub


The waters of Aruba are an extreme suitable training location for both Marine Units. Given the combination of climate, water temperature, water clarity and logistical support from the Marine Barracks at Savaneta, the conditions are optimal for an effective and successful training.

Caribbean Coastal Warrior fits within the ambitions of the Defense Force in the Caribbean Region to position itself (internationally) as a military training hub, both on land, on and in the water. A number of members of the Carib Diving Team will also participate in the training. The Diving Team Carib is a niche capacity that Defense can deploy for its own diving work such as inspections and/or repairs to quays and ships, but also to support local security partners in the Caribbean. □

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Continuation Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas



SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. Thanks to the efforts of various art organizations in

Aruba, such as Art Rules Aruba and Aruba Art Fair, San Nicolas has had quite the aesthetic makeover with regards to vibrant street art. Each year more and more stunning murals are replacing broken down buildings with colorful art pieces that keep brightening up Sunrise City.

Must See, Do, Buy & Eat

A little bit of everything can be found in the main street. Stores selling shoes, clothing, jewelry you name it. Arts & crafts by Co-secha store & Creative Center, a design store in which you can immerse yourself in discovering genuine and locally made arts and crafts which reflect the diversification of the Aruban craft heritage and the artistic supply of artisans. Don't miss out on trying the exquisite food offered by the cafes and restaurants or just enjoy a peaceful walk admiring the murals, mosaic benches and all the history San Nicolas has to offer. □



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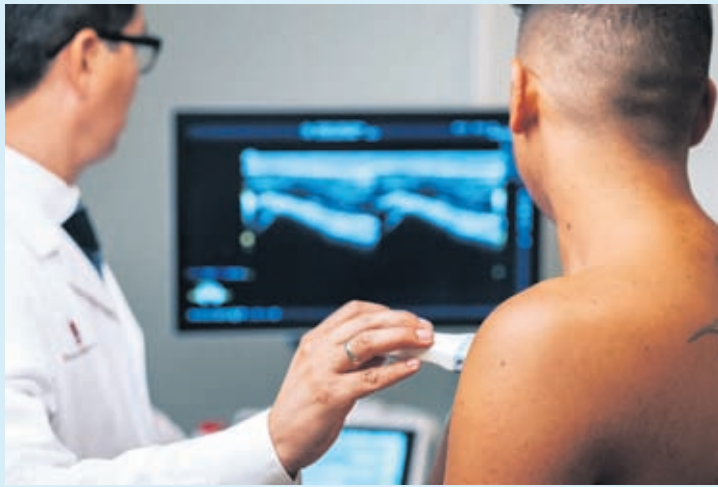
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Urgent Care vs. Emergency Room: Where should you go?

Imagine yourself arriving on the beautiful island of Aruba. You've scheduled your days with exciting activities or to relax by the beach or pool. Of course, the least you would expect is to get sick or become in need of medical assistance. Because honestly, who does that while on vacation?

But when that happens, you need to know who and where to visit. So, the first step is to assess your medical need and its urgency. At Urgent Care Aruba, we offer medical assistance for non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries. We accept walk-ins from Monday to Friday from 8 am to 8 pm, Saturday from 8 am to 4 pm, Sunday/Holiday from 10 am to 2 pm. Therefore, receive a better cost value than the Emergency



Room as the alternative option.

Other services offered at the Urgent Care Aruba is X-Ray (Without Appointment), Ultrasound (With Appointment), and Gynecology Services (With Appointment).

Visit us to assess your symptoms, and we'll provide you with a proper diagnosis and treatment since we will also provide you with a prescription if deemed necessary.

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Aruba is ready to participate in the Caribbean Pinks All Out 2022 in Curaçao

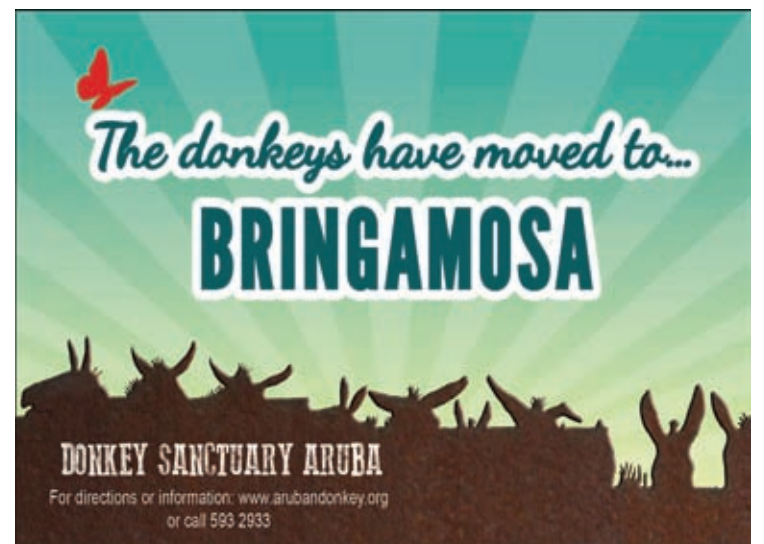


The Curaçao Tourist Board (CTB) together with the representatives of Jacky Circuit officially invited the drivers and fans of drag racing in Aruba to come and enjoy the drag races here in Curaçao and at the same time celebrate Flag Day with us.

During a press conference in Aruba, the Curaçao team provided information on all that our island has to offer as a tourist destination, and discussed the details of the drag races that will be taking place shortly in Curaçao. As usual, there was great interest. Sports and

drag racing in particular, is one of the marketing methods used by CTB as part of its strategy to promote our country abroad.

Besides the drag races, the event will also consist of an auto show and a concert, which makes it a quite interesting event. The weekend of July 1-3 will be packed with several activities on our island, making it a unique opportunity to visit Curaçao. Please visit the social media pages of Jacky Circuit for more information on the upcoming drag races.



Liz Weston: How to afford your meds and support your health

By **LIZ WESTON** of NerdWallet

The cost of prescription drugs in the U.S. can be enough to make you sick. What you pay varies enormously depending on the drug, the pharmacy, your insurance plan and your deductible, among many other factors. A drug that may have been cheap or at least affordable the last time you filled it could be far more expensive or not covered at all the next time.

Often, people have no idea what a prescription will cost until they get to the pharmacy counter, says Leigh Purvis, director of health care costs and access for AARP's Public Policy Institute.

Still, finding a way to afford your meds is important. People who don't take medicine as prescribed because of the cost could wind up sicker — or dead. "What is a potentially relatively small problem today, like high cholesterol, could turn into a much bigger problem like a heart attack down the road if you don't treat it," Purvis says.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR AND INSURANCE PLAN

Your doctors may not know what your medications cost you, since they're dealing

with dozens of insurance plans with different formularies, or lists of drugs, and how they're covered, Purvis explains. In addition, insurers may strike deals with certain pharmacies, so a drug that costs \$60 at one could cost \$160 at another. If affording a drug is a challenge, your physician may be able to suggest alternatives, such as a generic or a different type of medication. Two other questions you can ask: whether a medication you've been taking for a while is still necessary and what lifestyle changes might reduce or eliminate the need for prescriptions.

If you have insurance, review your drug coverage options carefully each year at open enrollment — that yearly period in the fall when you choose your health insurance for the following year. Make a list of all your medications with their dosages, and check how those are covered by each plan. Insurers regularly change their formularies, so you may need to switch plans to get the best coverage. And even if your drugs are covered, you'll typically have to pay out of pocket for prescriptions until you meet your deductible. Your insurer or pharmacy



This undated file photo provided by NerdWallet shows Liz Weston, a columnist for personal finance website NerdWallet.com.

Associated Press

may offer a mail-order option to reduce costs, but don't assume that's your best option. Shopping around could deliver significant savings.

LOOK AT ONLINE PRICES

Start your search online. The number of online pharmacies has exploded in recent years, giving you many more opportunities to save.

Amazon launched a full-service pharmacy in 2020, joining more established dispensaries, such as Costco.com and HealthWarehouse.com. Besides those,

several limited-service startups — including Cost Plus, GeniusRx, Honeybee, Ro Pharmacy and ScriptCo — offer deals on generic drugs. The startups usually don't take insurance, but their prices can be less than the typical co-payment, according to Consumer Reports. For example, the consumer research organization found that a 30-day supply for 20 milligrams of atorvastatin — a cholesterol drug — ranged from \$14.60 at Amazon and \$13.99 at Costco.com, to \$3 at Honeybee and

just 54 cents at ScriptCo. By contrast, insurance co-payments for workers with prescription drug coverage averaged \$11 to \$12 last year for the least expensive drugs, including many generics, according to KFF, the nonpartisan health care think tank formerly known as the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Your savings may be offset by membership fees: Amazon's Prime membership — which you'll need if you want the lowest prices — is \$139 per year or \$14.99 per month, while ScriptCo charges \$140 per year or \$50 per quarter. Costco has a membership fee of \$60 a year, but you don't need to be a member to order prescriptions online or at its warehouse stores.

INVESTIGATE OTHER DISCOUNTS

GoodRx has a website and an app that allows you to compare prices at nearby chain pharmacies, and it provides free coupons that can save up to 80% off of the list price. You'll find another price comparison tool that includes local pharmacies at NeedyMeds, a nonprofit that helps people find drug manufacturing discount programs and other ways to reduce medication costs. □

Automakers ask Congress to lift electric vehicle tax cap

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Major automakers are asking Congress to lift the cap on how many people can receive tax credits for buying a hybrid or fully electric vehicle.

Currently the number of tax credits allowed are capped at 200,000 per company. General Motors and Tesla have already reached the cap and Toyota is close to it.

In a letter to leaders of the Senate and House of Representatives on Monday, the chief executives of Ford, Toyota, GM and Stellantis asked that tax credits be extended to anyone who seeks to buy a qualified vehicle.

Automakers want the cap

lifted until "the EV market is more mature," they said, without giving a time frame.

"Eliminating the cap will incentivize consumer adoption of future electrified options and provide much-needed certainty to our customers and domestic workforce," the CEOs wrote.

The request comes as Americans find themselves financially pinched from all directions by four-decade high inflation. Energy prices have been especially bad, with the average cost for a gallon of gas in the U.S. breaching \$5 this weekend, according to the auto club AAA.

Automakers said Monday that the tax credit has al-

lowed them to offer more affordable cars to people, helping accelerate the adoption of EVs. However, the companies said recent economic conditions and supply chain constraints have raised the cost of manufacturing EVs and those costs have to be passed on to car buyers already paying more for almost everything.

President Joe Biden has attempted to ensure the supply of materials needed to produce electric vehicles continues to flow as the nation transitions away from fossil fuels.

Biden in April invoked the 1950 Defense Production Act to boost production of lithium and other minerals critical in powering electric



A 2021 Ford Mustang Mach E charges at a Ford dealer in Wexford, Pa on May 6, 2021.

Associated Press

vehicles.

Toyota's plug-in RAV4 Prime small SUV with 42 miles of electric range earns the buyer a \$7,500 credit, the largest available. The Prius Prime plug-in, with 25 miles

of electric range, gets \$4,500.

The letter was signed by GM CEO Mary Barra, Toyota CEO Ted Ogawa, Ford CEO Jim Farley and Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares. □

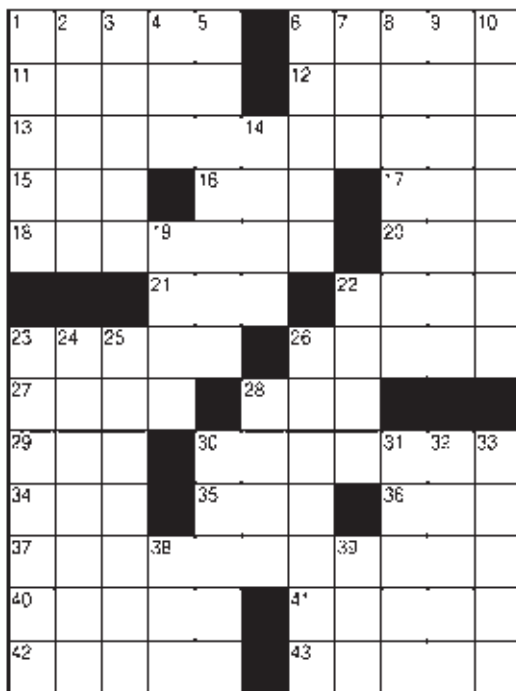
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By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 40 "— Is Bom"
 - 1 Eastern monks
 - 6 Showed interest
 - 11 Over-flowing
 - 12 Forsaken
 - 13 Court needs
 - 15 Table scrap
 - 16 "Very funny!" online
 - 17 Young fox
 - 18 Leftover stuff
 - 20 Marnie's mate
 - 21 Army bed
 - 22 Keg contents
 - 23 Low noble
 - 26 Wizards' needs
 - 27 Ready for business
 - 28 Polite address
 - 29 Phone download
 - 30 Avenue in Monopoly
 - 34 Pot brew
 - 35 Con-clusion
 - 36 Bullfight call
 - 37 Costume events

DOWN

- 1 Toil away
- 2 In the know
- 3 Ship poles
- 4 Inquire
- 5 "The Big Bang Theory" role
- 6 Dark fur
- 7 Imitating
- 8 Gandalf's creator
- 9 Not popular
- 10 Annoys
- 14 Race tipster
- 19 File stand-in
- 22 Homer's son
- 23 Charon, for
- 24 Placate one
- 25 Meals impress
- 26 Talkative sort
- 28 Dispatch
- 30 Goes off course
- 31 Pitcher Ryan
- 32 Skate-boarding jump
- 33 Takes ten
- 38 "Krazy —"
- 39 Really



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One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-14

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K ZNQTENZSTW XUBY, INJB
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DJJD BQZ ZNJ SWKF QBWC,
HTZ ZNJ BKZUQB UZDJWS.

— NJBAC IKAY HJPNJA

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: AT MIDNIGHT, IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, I STAND BENEATH THE MYSTIC MOON. — EDGAR ALLAN POE

Many baby formula plants weren't inspected because of COVID



Baby formula is displayed on the shelves of a grocery store in Carmel, Ind. on May 10, 2022.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. regulators have historically inspected baby formula plants at least once a year, but they did not inspect any of the three biggest manufacturers in 2020, according to federal records reviewed by The Associated Press.

When they finally did get inside an Abbott Nutrition formula plant in Michigan after a two-year gap, they found standing water and lax sanitation procedures. But inspectors offered only voluntary suggestions for fixing the problems, and issued no formal warning.

Inspectors would return five months later after four infants who consumed powdered formula from the plant suffered bacterial infections. They found bacterial contamination inside the factory, leading to a four-month shutdown and turning a festering supply shortage into a full-blown crisis that sent parents scrambling to find formula and forced the U.S. to airlift products from overseas.

The gap in baby formula plant inspections, brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, is getting new scrutiny from Congress and

government watchdogs investigating the series of missteps that led to the crisis. A recent bill would require the Food and Drug Administration to inspect infant formula facilities every six months. And the government's inspector general for health has launched an inquiry into the FDA's handling of Abbott's facility, the largest in the U.S.

Abbott resumed production at the plant early this month under a legally binding agreement with the FDA, but the shutdown and nationwide shortage exposed how concentrated the industry has become in the U.S., with a handful of companies accounting for roughly 90% of the market. As COVID-19 swept across the U.S. in early 2020, the FDA pulled most of its safety inspectors from the field, skipping thousands of routine plant inspections.

The FDA did conduct more than 800 "mission critical" inspections during the first year of the pandemic, the agency said in a statement. Regulators selected facilities for inspections based on whether they carried a specific safety risk or were needed to produce an im-

portant medical therapy. Only three of the nation's 23 facilities that make, package or distribute formula made the cut. The FDA resumed routine inspections in July 2021.

The inspection records reviewed by the AP show gaps as large as 2 1/2 years between FDA's 2019 inspections and when regulators returned to plants owned by the three leading formula manufacturers: Abbott, Reckitt and Gerber.

In fact, the FDA still has yet to return to one key plant owned by Reckitt and two owned by Gerber, according to agency records. All those facilities are operating around the clock to boost U.S. formula production.

"The FDA would have had more chances to catch these issues if they'd been inspecting during the pandemic," said Sarah Sorscher, a food safety specialist with the Center for Science in the Public Interest. She acknowledged the difficult trade-off the FDA faced in pulling its inspectors to reduce their exposure to COVID-19. "Certainly there was a price to pay for protecting their workers during that time."

Baby formula manufacturers were "consistently identified as a high priority during the pandemic," and there is currently no backlog of inspections, the agency told the AP in response to inquiries about the gaps. The agency said it skipped about 15,000 U.S. inspections due to COVID, but it has already made up about 5,000 of those, exceeding its own goals.

Under current law, the FDA is only required to inspect formula facilities every three to five years, but the agency has consistently inspected facilities annually — until the pandemic.

"Our top priority now is addressing the urgent need for infant formula in the U.S. market, and our teams are working night and day to help make that happen," FDA stated. □

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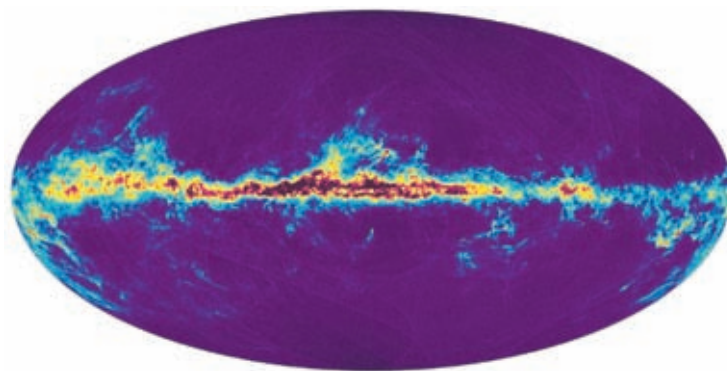
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24/7

Classifieds

European star survey reveals celestial treasure trove



This map shows the interstellar dust that fills the Milky Way.
Associated Press

By FRANK JORDANS
BERLIN (AP) — The European Space Agency released a trove of data Monday on almost 2 billion stars in the Milky Way, collected by its Gaia space observatory in an effort to create the most accurate and complete map of our galaxy.

Astronomers hope to use the data to understand better how stars are born and die, and how the Milky Way evolved over billions of years.

The new data includes new information such as the age, mass, temperature and chemical composition of stars. This can be used, for example, to determine which stars were born in another galaxy and then migrated to the Milky Way. □

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United Arab Emirates bans Pixar's 'Lightyear' from showing

By JON GAMBRELL

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United Arab Emirates on Monday banned the upcoming Pixar animated feature "Lightyear" from showing in movie theaters after its inclusion of a kiss between two lesbian characters.

The decision by the UAE comes as Malaysia also reportedly will ban the film, raising the possibility other Muslim-majority nations could follow suit on one of Disney's biggest animated films of the year as the film industry comes out of the depths of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Emirates, home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, announced through its Media Regulatory Office of the country's Ministry of Youth and Culture that the film would not be opening in the country this Thursday. The film "is not licensed for public screening in all cinemas in the UAE, due to its violation of the country's media content standards," the office said in a tweet. "The office confirms that all films screened in cinemas across the country are subject to follow-up and evaluation before the date of screening to the public,



This image released by Disney/Pixar shows character Buzz Lightyear, voiced by Chris Evans, left, and Alisha Hawthorne, voiced by Uzo Aduba, in a scene from the animated film "Lightyear," releasing June 17.

Associated Press

to ensure the safety of the circulated content according to the appropriate age classification."

The office did not elaborate on the tweet and did not immediately respond to questions from The Associated Press. The tweet included an image of the film's poster, with the profile image of its main character Buzz Lightyear with a "no" symbol over it in red.

Movie theaters in the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula, had already advertised showtimes for the film. But over the weekend, a social media campaign with the Arabic hashtag

"Ban Showing Lightyear in the Emirates," caught the attention of conservative Emiratis. They described showing a lesbian couple on screen as being against their culture and religion.

The movie, with actor Chris Evans voicing the inspiration for the Buzz Lightyear action figure from the "Toy Story" films, includes a female character voiced by actress Uzo Aduba kissing her female partner.

The UAE, many other countries in the wider Mideast, is a Muslim-led nation that criminalizes same-sex relationships. The U.S. State Department warns that Islamic, or Shariah, law in the

UAE can include the death penalty for same-sex conduct, while Dubai can levy a 10-year prison sentence and Abu Dhabi allows for up to 14 years.

However, such prosecutions are rarely reported and LGBTQ individuals do live in the skyscraper-studded city-state of Dubai, home to the long-haul carrier Emirates.

The \$200 million "Lightyear" is expected to be a major draw for Disney, with analysts estimating it could gross over \$100 million in its first weekend.

Studios have allowed censors to cut films in global distribution for content in the

past, including in the Mideast market. Recently, Disney has faced protests from activists and its own staff over what they described as CEO Bob Chapek's slow response in publicly criticizing Florida legislation that opponents dubbed the "Don't Say Gay" bill.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in late March signed the bill, which forbids instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade.

The moment had been earlier cut from the film but was restored after Pixar employees protested Disney's response to Florida's bill.

The movie also may be banned in Malaysia as well. The Star, the country's top English-language newspaper, cited an anonymous, nongovernment source as saying that Lightyear will not be shown in Malaysian cinemas. No reasons were given. A newspaper in the Persian Gulf island kingdom of Bahrain similarly has speculated the film wouldn't be shown there. Officials from Malaysia's Film Censorship Board and the Home Affairs Ministry, as well as The Walt Disney Co., could not be immediately reached for comment. □

Amber Heard says she doesn't blame jury in Depp libel case



This image released by NBC News shows journalist Savannah Guthrie, right, during an exclusive interview with actor Amber Heard, airing Tuesday, June 14 and Wednesday, June 15 on NBC's "Today" show and Friday, June 17 on "Dateline NBC."

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Amber Heard says she doesn't blame the jury that awarded Johnny Depp more than \$10 million after a contentious six-week libel trial in her first post-verdict interview.

"I don't blame them," Heard

told "Today" co-host Savannah Guthrie in an interview clip aired Monday on NBC. "I actually understand. He's a beloved character and people feel they know him. He's a fantastic actor."

"Today" plans to air more of its interview with Heard

on Tuesday and Wednesday. The interview is airing nearly two weeks after the verdict, which also saw Heard awarded \$2 million over her claim that one of Depp's attorneys defamed her.

Depp sued Heard for libel in Virginia over a December 2018 op-ed she wrote in The Washington Post describing herself as "a public figure representing domestic abuse." His lawyers said he was defamed by the article even though it never mentioned his name.

The verdicts brought an end to a televised trial that Depp hopes will help restore his reputation, though it turned into a spectacle that offered a window into a volatile marriage and both actors emerged with unclear prospects for their

careers.

Guthrie pressed Heard on her credibility and what it meant to jurors in the clips released Monday. "There's no polite way to say it. The jury looked at the evidence you presented.

They listened to your testimony and they did not believe you," she said. "They thought you were lying."

Heard responded, "How could they not come to that conclusion? They had sat in those seats and heard over three weeks of non-stop, relentless testimony from paid employees" and witnesses the actor described as "randos" or random people.

Depp, who has not yet done a formal interview about the case, has said the verdict "gave me my life back." Heard said in a

statement after the verdict that she was heartbroken, while her attorney said in a separate "Today" interview that her client was "demonized" on social media and she plans to appeal the judgment.

"I don't care what one thinks about me or what judgments you want to make about what happened in the privacy of my own home, in my marriage, behind closed doors. I don't presume the average person should know those things, and so I don't take it personally," Heard told Guthrie. "You still couldn't look me in the eye and tell me that you think on social media there's been a fair representation. You cannot tell me that you think that this has been fair," Heard said. □

After lengthy skid, Angels will try to defy history

By NOAH TRISTER
AP Baseball Writer

The Los Angeles Angels finally ended their 14-game losing streak.

If Mike Trout, Shohei Ohtani and Co. can rebound from that and make the playoffs, it would be unprecedented.

No team has reached the postseason after a losing streak of more than 11 games, according to Sportradar. The Angels played well enough before their skid that they're still in the thick of the playoff race now. Los Angeles fired manager Joe Maddon last week, but with Trout and Ohtani in the fold, a 3 1/2-game deficit in the wild-card race is certainly surmountable.

Three teams lost 11 games in a row and made the postseason anyway. It happened first during one of the most famous pennant races in baseball history. The New York Giants lost 11 straight in April of 1951, but they eventually ran down the Brooklyn Dodgers and advanced to the World Series on Bobby Thomson's famous home run. In 1982, the Atlanta Braves



Los Angeles Angels' Mike Trout (27) runs to first while doubling during the third inning of a baseball game against the Boston Red Sox in Anaheim, Calif., Tuesday, June 7, 2022.

Associated Press

started the season with 13 straight wins. That helped them withstand an 11-game skid in August and win the NL West anyway. In 2017, the Los Angeles Dodgers won 104 games. They might have challenged the all-time record for victories if not for an 11-game losing streak that September.

The longest losing streak by an eventual World Series champion was nine games by the 1953 New York Yankees. The Angels certainly hope the worst is behind them. Ohtani pitched seven innings and hit a two-run homer Thursday night, when they snapped their skid with a win over Boston. Trout hit two homers Satur-

day night in a victory over the New York Mets.

ALSO SLUMPING

Milwaukee lost eight in a row before a victory over Washington on Sunday. The Brewers now trail St. Louis by a half-game atop the NL Central.

It's not all that unusual for a team to make the postseason despite an eight-game

losing streak, however. In fact, the 2006 St. Louis Cardinals had two separate eight-game losing streaks on their way to a World Series title.

A total of 34 teams have made the postseason despite losing streaks of eight games or more. Of those teams, 30 did it after the start of divisional play, 22 during the wild-card era, and seven in the last decade after a second wild card was added to each league.

As the standard for making the postseason has become more forgiving, it's become easier for teams to overcome an awful week or two.

TRIVIA TIME

Who is the most recent team to make the postseason despite an eight-game losing streak?

LINE OF THE WEEK

Matt Carpenter homered twice and drove in seven runs Sunday to lead the Yankees to an 18-4 rout of the Chicago Cubs. New York signed Carpenter on May 26, and he became the first Yankees player to hit six homers in his first 10 games. □

None of Federer, Nadal, Djokovic in ATP top 2; 1st since '03

By HOWARD FENDRICH
AP Tennis Writer

None of the so-called Big Three of men's tennis — Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic — was in the No. 1 or No. 2 spots in the ATP rankings on Monday, the first time that's been the case in nearly 20 years.

Daniil Medvedev rose one place to return to No. 1, where he briefly spent time earlier this season, and Alexander Zverev moved up to a career-best No. 2. Djokovic slid from No. 1 to No. 3, because his points for winning the French Open in 2021 dropped off his record on Monday. The ATP rankings are based on a player's top 18 tournament results over the preceding 52 weeks (19 if he participated in the ATP Tour Finals).

There was not nearly as

much shifting in the WTA rankings on Monday, with Iga Swiatek remaining at No. 1. The only change in the women's top 20 was Aryna Sabalenka's move from No. 6 to No. 5, switching with Maria Sakkari.

Last year's French Open was delayed a week from its originally scheduled spot on the calendar because of concerns about COVID-19, so points earned from that event are falling off only now, while this year's French Open points were added last week, because the final was June 5. At Roland Garros this year, Djokovic's title defense ended with a quarterfinal loss to Nadal, who wound up earning his 14th championship at Roland Garros — and 22nd career Grand Slam trophy.

Nadal remained at No. 4 this week; even though he

has won the season's first two major tournaments, he missed most of the last half of 2021 and part of this year, too, so he only has 10 tournaments on his 52-week record.

French Open runner-up Casper Ruud went up one spot to a career-high No. 5. Federer had a series of knee operations and hasn't played anywhere since Wimbledon last July. He only has points from four tournaments left on his record and is ranked 68th this week.

Federer was at No. 3, behind No. 1 Andy Roddick and No. 2 Juan Carlos Ferrero, the week of Nov. 10, 2003, with Nadal outside the top 40 and Djokovic — who wouldn't make his Grand Slam debut until 2005 — outside the top 500. A week later, Federer would rise to No. 2.



Spain's Rafael Nadal reacts after defeating Serbia's Novak Djokovic in their quarterfinal match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium Tuesday, May 31, 2022 in Paris. Nadal won 6-2, 4-6, 6-2, 7-6.

Associated Press

Medvedev first reached No. 1 in February, replacing Djokovic there for three weeks, and now returns following a runner-up finish at a tournament in Holland. Neither he nor Zverev will be at Wimbledon, however. Medvedev is Russian, and the All England Club

banned all players from there and Belarus because of the invasion of Ukraine. Zverev will sit out the grass-court Grand Slam tournament after having surgery for torn ligaments in his right ankle; he was injured during his French Open semifinal against Nadal. □

Suárez's win at last delivers a Mexican Cup winner

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) —

Here are some things to know about Daniel Suárez's long journey before becoming the first Mexico-born winner at the top level of NASCAR:

— When he decided as a child in Monterrey to seriously pursue a career as a racecar driver, Suárez's father closed his well-known automobile restoration shop to support his son.

— Suárez's first move to the United States to pursue his dream wasn't a relocation to NASCAR's hub in Charlotte, North Carolina, but rather an unconventional arrangement to live with his team owner in Buffalo, New York.

— He spoke no English and had to learn by watching cartoons, programming with light dialogue that could teach him the basics. — When he finally made it to North Carolina, he crashed with various friends until at last landing the cheapest apartment he could find in Mooresville, unofficially known as "Race City USA" because of its proximity to NASCAR shops. It was the hardest two years of his life.

"I didn't have money to buy myself classes to speak English," recalled Suárez. "I remember one day waking up and being scared that the language barrier was going to keep me away from my goal, which was being a winner, a championship winner in the NASCAR Cup Series. I didn't



Daniel Suarez drinks some of the wine from the winner's goblet after a NASCAR Cup Series race, Sunday, June 12, 2022, at Sonoma Raceway in Sonoma, Calif.

Associated Press

want that to happen. I started working extremely hard to learn English.

"It's been quite a journey. That's why I felt like my story is very similar to many, many Mexicans, Latinos, out there coming to this country, trying to find a goal or trying to find their dream. If I was able to make it happen, everyone out there can make it happen."

Suárez is only the fifth Cup winner born outside the U.S. in NASCAR history. He won on the road course at Sonoma Raceway, in his 195th career start, to join Marcos Ambrose (Australia), Juan Pablo Montoya (Colombia), Earl Ross (Canada) and none other than Mario Andretti (Italy)

as internationally-born Cup winners.

But Suárez had won long before Sunday, first in the NASCAR Peak Mexico Series, then in K&N, then a Truck Series race driving for Kyle Busch. He was beloved by Toyota, which very much wanted him in its program, and he advanced into an Xfinity Series ride with Joe Gibbs Racing that should have changed his life.

Suárez won three races and the 2016 Xfinity title, and maybe in another year he'd be ready for Cup. Instead, Carl Edwards abruptly retired and with an unexpected hole to fill in its Cup lineup, JGR hastily promoted Suárez.

He wasn't ready to drive the No. 19 Toyota, and JGR

gave him two seasons before cutting him loose to promote Erik Jones. JGR has since cut Jones, too.

Stewart-Haas Racing took a shot on Suárez in 2019 and he thought he'd cobbled together the sponsorship to keep the seat longer than one season. The weekend of the finale, he learned he'd been fired for the second time in a year. Gaunt Brothers Racing took Suárez for the 2020 season but it was a fledgling team and failed to qualify for the season-opening Daytona 500. The remaining 35 races were awful and Gaunt Brothers has run just eight races since Justin Marks threw Suárez a lifeline at the end of that season.

Marks was launching Track-

house Racing and wanted to build it around Suárez, who was joining his fourth team in four years. Marks is a former driver but also a businessman; he believed Suárez could be a winner in the right environment, and also recognized what a Mexican driver could do for Trackhouse.

As he built Trackhouse around Suárez, Marks brought entertainer Pitbull into his ownership group. The duo had clear goals of tapping the Latino market and making an impact on youth in America's minority communities.

The biggest move was last summer when Marks bought the entire NASCAR organization from Chip Ganassi, which gave him the people, the parts and the shop he needed to field a winning team. It also gave him room for a second car and the seat went to Ross Chastain, who not only won Trackhouse's first Cup race this March but added a second victory, as well.

Suárez was supposed to win Trackhouse's first race, not Chastain. Now Chastain was locked into the playoffs while Suárez was below the playoff cutline with not much to show for his improvement.

Immediately after Suárez took the checkered flag Sunday, Marks noted that Suárez and crew chief Travis Mack built Trackhouse and Chastain victories were "tough on them. But they never gave up, they knew they were going to be in victory lane." □



Phoenix Mercury's Brittney Griner (42) is congratulated on a play against the Seattle Storm in the first half of the second round of the WNBA basketball playoffs Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021, in Everett, Wash.

Associated Press

State Department officials meet with Griner's WNBA team

WASHINGTON (AP) — State Department officials met Monday with representatives of Brittney Griner's WNBA team about the Phoenix Mercury star's monthslong detention in Russia and the Biden administration's efforts to secure her release.

The State Department confirmed the meeting, which involved officials from its specialized office that ad-

vocates for hostages and wrongfully detained Americans, but offered no additional details about what was said or who specifically attended.

The administration has previously said that its working to bring Griner and another American, Michigan corporate security executive Paul Whelan, home from Russia.

Griner was detained on

Feb. 17 at an airport in Russia after authorities there said a search of her bag revealed vape cartridges containing a cannabis derivative. In May, the State Department reclassified Griner as wrongfully detained and transferred oversight of her case to the State Department Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, or SPEHA. □